

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIEFING PAPER

US-ROK SECURITY RELATIONSHIP/MILITARY BALANCE IN KOREA

Hostilities on the Peninsula ended in July 1953 with the signing of an armistice by the commanders of the opposing forces. The Republic of Korea did not sign the armistice, but subsequently agreed to abide by it. The ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty, signed in September, 1953, is the US commitment to defend South Korea.

In 1968, after the North Korean assassination attempt against former President Park and the capture of the USS Pueblo, we and the Koreans agreed to hold annual meetings of the US Defense Secretary and the Korean Minister of National Defense. These Security Consultative Meetings (SCM's) enhance the security relationship between our two countries.

In November 1978, the US-Korean Combined Forces Command (CFC) was created and assumed military operational functions formerly handled by the United Nations Command. The UN Command is now primarily a peacekeeping/armistice affairs headquarters. In spite of myriad headquarters and the complex command relationships in Korea, the system works because one man, a US Army general, simultaneously heads the major commands.

During the 1970's North Korea carried out a far-reaching force improvement and expansion program that went beyond defensive requirements. The steady buildup emphasized offensive capabilities and was made at great sacrifice to the North Korean economy. It was prompted primarily by a determination to create a viable military option as part of the North's reunification strategy. (See table for North-South comparison).

North Korea is expected to improve upon this massive military buildup during the 1980's. Although our intelligence on North Korean military plans is not complete, the continued fielding of new weapon systems and the expansion of known defense plans indicate that the North Korean military buildup will continue well into the 1990's. The quantitative gains of the 1970's, however, will probably not be matched. Rather, emphasis will be on qualitative improvements in such areas as mobility, firepower, and sustainability.

The presence of 39,000 US troops on the Korean peninsula, and the US commitment to reinforce the South with considerable air, naval, and logistical support if needed, has deterred the North from renewing hostilities for more than 30 years. In addition to forces on the Peninsula, the US has considerable combat power in Japan, the Philippines and Hawaii that could quickly be brought to bear if deterrence failed.

The ROK-US security relationship, strengthened by shared combat experiences not only in Korea but in Vietnam as well, rests on a sound base. This relationship is key to the maintenance of peace on the Peninsula and stability in the region.

SECRET

COMMAND RELATIONS IN THE ROK

BACKGROUND:

- The 1953 US/ROK Mutual Defense Treaty is the basis for the bilateral security relationship. The US also has obligations based on 1950 UN Security Council resolutions and the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement.
- The US and ROK hold annual ministerial level Security Consultative Meetings and JCS-level Military Committee Meetings. The bilateral Military Committee provides strategic direction and operational guidance to the ROK/US Combined Forces Command.
- The military command and control structure in Korea is the most complex in which the US military has ever been involved. At the same time the decision-making process at the highest levels is one of the simplest because General Sennewald, the Senior US Military Officer in Korea, and many of his senior assistants have multiple assignments in the various headquarters.

CURRENT STATUS:

- The Senior US Military Officer in Korea (General Sennewald) serves as Commander in Chief, United Nations Command (CINCUNC), Command in Chief, ROK/US Combined Forces Command (CINCCFC), Commander, US Forces, Korea (COMUSKOREA), CG Eighth US Army (CG EUSA), and the Ground Component Commander of UNC and CFC.
- United Nations Command (UNC): An international command established by the US in response to 1950 UN Security Council resolutions. CINCUNC has exclusive responsibility for our side's compliance with the Armistice and would exercise operational control (OPCON) over any third country forces provided in wartime.
- Combined Forces Command (CFC): A bilateral (US/ROK) command established by the USG and ROKG in 1978. CINCCFC has OPCON of most ROK combat forces, certain US air defense forces, and any US forces provided in wartime.
- US Forces Korea (USFK): A US command, USFK is a major subordinate unified command of CINCPAC. COMUSKOREA has OPCON of EUSA and may have OPCON of other US forces in wartime.

- Eighth US Army (EUSA): A major US Army command (MACOM) under the OPCON of COMUSKOREA. CG EUSA commands most of the US Army forces in Korea, including the 2d Infantry Division, the 19th Support Command, the 2d Aviation Group, and the 17th Aviation Group.
- OTHER US COMMANDS/ORGANIZATIONS:
 - 314th Air Division (MG Craven C. Rogers, Jr.): Subordinate to the Commander, 5th Air Force (located in Japan), MG Rogers commands 2 tactical fighter wings, a tactical air support squadron and RF-4 and F-15 elements.
 - Joint US Military Assistance Group-Korea (JUSMAG-K): Chief, JUSMAG-K (MG Hugh J. Quinn) is responsible for administration of the US security assistance program to the ROK.
 - UNC Component, Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC): Senior Member, UNCMAC (RADM F. Warren Kelley) maintains 24 hour a day communication with the opposing side and meets at Panmunjom as required to negotiate/discuss Armistice matters.
 - There are no US Navy or US Marine Corps combat elements in Korea.